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Dear Mr. Ambassador:

I am enclosing a Memorandum of Conversation recording the meeting of President Kennedy and General Chiang Ching-kuo on September 11.

I would appreciate it very much if you would forward this Memorandum directly to President Chiang by the most secure and expeditious means available.

Sincerely yours,

Edward E. Rice
Deputy

Enclosure:

Memorandum of Conversation

His Excellency
Tingfu F. Tsiang,
Chinese Ambassador.

FE:EA/ROC:FMPopple/lf 10/11/63

TOP SECRET

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Washington, D.C.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY - CHIANG CHING-KUO
(September 11, 1963)

1. General Chiang opened the substantive part of the conversation by presenting to the President a letter from President Chiang Kai-shek. After reading the letter, the President asked Chiang what he felt were the military prospects for intensified GRC raids on the Chinese mainland, such as the letter was suggesting, in view of the GRC experience with small scale raids in the recent past. The President asked what was the basis for the GRC belief that airdrop operations of 100 to 300 men and sea-borne landings of 300 to 500 men would be successful.

2. General Chiang replied that President Chiang had asked him to present the following views:

a. The signing of the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty is a diplomatic victory for the United States which will help to preserve world peace. (President Kennedy then expressed appreciation for the signing by the Republic of China of the Treaty.)

b. The Sino-Soviet dispute is a favorable development because, within the premises of maintenance of the status quo and the preservation of peace, it gives us a chance to use the forces now available to us to weaken the Chinese Communists.

c. The Sino-Soviet dispute is primarily a personal one between Mao and Khrushchev. Thus, the dispute could continue to worsen or there could be a 180-degree change.

d. President Chiang greatly admires President Kennedy's foresight in predicting in a recent speech that by 1970 the Chinese Communists could become a much greater menace. President Chiang believes that the Chinese Communists must not be allowed to recover from their present difficulties but that advantage should be taken of the present situation to harass and disrupt them, to weaken them so that it will be possible to launch a successful counter-attack sometime in the future.

3. The President asked Chiang what weight he gave to historical and geographic factors in the Sino-Soviet dispute, noting his own feeling that the geographic factors had considerable importance. Chiang replied that while geography was important, in the Orient personality was a more important factor. This was especially true of the Communist party on the mainland.

4. Chiang said that President Chiang feels that the United States and the GRC should get together to take advantage of the present situation. Fully aware of the peace policy of the United States, President Chiang feels that this is not the time for large-scale

military operations against the mainland. But if lesser attacks are not made against the mainland, if the Chinese Communists are left in peace to overcome their present serious difficulties, if means are not found to disrupt, disturb and disorganize them, the Chinese Communists will be able to develop into a far greater international menace than they have been in the past. Even though Soviet military aid has been discontinued, the Chinese Communists will still be able to consolidate. While political and psychological warfare is important, it will not be effective unless military measures are carried on simultaneously. The GRC envisages an augmented program of attacks by airdrop operations and seaborne commando landings, but not a large-scale invasion.

5. President Kennedy inquired about the degree of success of the guerrilla raids carried out in the recent past, and asked for details concerning the number of raids and percentage of casualties involved.

Chiang replied that as military operations these raids had not seen much success, but from the point of view of their disruptive effect on the Chinese Communists, there had been much better results. Since last October, 28 raids had been carried out, involving teams ranging from six to 28 men. Most of the raiders were recent refugees from the areas attacked. Half of four teams were able to return to Taiwan. All other personnel became casualties. This meant a casualty rate of 85 percent. The significance of these raids lies not in the percentage of casualties but rather in the disruptive effect on the Chinese Communists, as demonstrated by Chinese Communist broadcasts themselves. For example, on July 28 of this year, a ten-man team was landed and suffered 100 percent casualties. But according to Chinese Communist radio broadcasts, 3,000 troops were mobilized to deal with the team and 205 officers and men were later rewarded for their part in the operations against the raiders. Similarly, according to the Chinese Communist radio, 1,500 CPR troops fought for three days to deal with a team which landed in Chekiang June 27.

These examples illustrate that, although most of the raiders may be casualties, the raids achieve their purposes: i.e., to cause trouble on the mainland, to raise the morale of the people, who hope for liberation, and to upset the organization of the army. The ability of the GRC to carry out these raids, however, is hindered by lack of transport and other factors.

6. The President asked what the GRC had in mind with regard to airdrops.

Chiang replied that the numbers involved would range from 20 to 100 or more depending upon the situation. Such operations would not lead to a world war, but would serve to keep the Chinese Communists on the defensive. Also, atomic research and development installations and missile emplacements might be likely targets for airborne raids. The purpose of these operations would be to weaken the strength of the Chinese Communists progressively over the next 12 to 18 months, to see what the result would be. President Chiang's idea is to proceed to establish a foothold on the continent, when the time is ripe, through the occupation of one or more provinces south of the Yangtze River.

The frequency and size of the airdrops would depend upon the situation, the target, and upon joint discussions with your officials. The size of the teams might range from 50 to 300 men. Both sides would have to study this.

7. The President asked what Chiang thought would be the result of such airdrops.

Chiang replied that likely targets would be in more inaccessible areas where communications were poor, where there were relatively few garrison troops, and where unrest was more pronounced. If 200 to 300 men were dropped, they might be able to seize a county, in which case the people would be likely to rally around them.

8. The President asked what information had been gathered from the recent landings or from intelligence sources which led the GRC to believe that the people would support such operations or that there would be defections in the Chinese Communist army.

Chiang replied that the overall picture on the mainland was one of growing unrest. Raiding operations would be carried out in areas where this unrest was marked; for example, slave labor camps would be ideal targets.

9. The President asked concerning the nature of GRC intelligence contacts on the mainland.

Chiang replied that the GRC has many intelligence sources. In July there had been a revolt of slave laborers in Chung-shan County, Kwangtung province. The GRC had despatched a team of ten men to stimulate revolt there, but the timing had been poor and too few were involved.

10. The President asked how many intelligence agents the GRC had on the mainland.

Chiang replied that there were 3,124 intelligence operatives, 1,003 agents engaged in sabotage, and 1,246 communication agents. The GRC depends to a considerable extent on persons travelling to and from the mainland and on clandestine correspondence for intelligence.

11. The President emphasized that the United States felt there was a particular lack of hard intelligence from the China mainland. United States actions in Cuba, for example, had suffered for lack of hard intelligence. We feel that there is insufficient detailed and reliable intelligence from the China mainland. If the GRC has such intelligence, the President hoped that it would be made available to us.

Chiang replied that, on this point, the President should understand a special characteristic of the Chinese people. The latter want to be rid of the Communists, but without anyone to lead and to organize them, they are reluctant to act. Throughout Chinese history, troops have hesitated to take action to revolt unless there were assurances of an external source of help. The same consideration applies to the Chinese

people. The most important thing is not to allow the Chinese Communists to consolidate and to have peace and quiet over the next year. To let them alone for the coming year would be to permit them to survive this critical period and to advance to greater strength. What methods are to be used to prevent this consolidation is another matter, one which the United States and the GRC should discuss.

12. The President agreed that under the Communist control apparatus the people have no means to express their dissatisfaction. But it is an extremely serious matter for the United States to become involved in support of the operations suggested by General Chiang, particularly in view of the fact that the United States part would inevitably become public knowledge. There is no doubt that it is to our common advantage to weaken the Chinese Communists, but we do not want to become involved in operations which could be regarded as attacks on the mainland and which would fail. Thus, detailed and accurate intelligence is extremely important. Our intelligence people feel that there is a considerable lack of such intelligence. We need to know definitely the extent of unrest on the mainland and, for example, whether or not major officials are likely to defect. The United States is not sure that the operations can be successful until the whole mainland is ready for revolt.

13. Chiang stated that the question is one of how to deny the Chinese Communists a period of peace and quiet which would enable them to survive their present difficult situation. In this regard, aside from political and psychological warfare, it is important to step up raids by air and sea.

14. The President observed that 28 small-scale raids were not very significant. It did not appear that these raids had disrupted the mainland regime in any large degree.

Chiang replied that the need now was to increase the size of the raids, and that the GRC needed more transport and technical help to do this. The goal of these larger raids would be to multiply the disruption which had already been caused. Since the Chinese Communists had been obliged to use 3,000 men to deal with a small raid, more and larger raids would force them to use greater forces, and would cause commensurately greater disruption.

15. The President asked what the GRC wanted over the next 12 months in this regard.

Chiang replied that over the next 12 to 18 months the GRC would need to use the four C-123's which it now has, but is not using, and an additional five C-130's. It would also need additional landing craft. If agreement could be reached on principle, details can be determined at the working level.

16. The President noted that he felt the Chinese Communists pose a tremendous danger to world peace, and that the United States is willing

to do any reasonable thing which would weaken their power. Our concern is that our policy should be determined by reality and not by our hopes or by our optimism. Thus, we feel that we should concentrate on improvement in the intelligence gathering field. With better intelligence and more facts, we can be more sure that our actions suit the situation. The small raids which have been carried out, for example, would appear to have been useful in teaching us a lesson concerning the feasibility of such operations. The sacrifice made by the many brave men who took part shows that the Chinese Communists still exercise effective control on the mainland.

For our part, we shall study carefully the GRC proposal for use of additional ships and planes. But such a study will depend upon more intelligence from the GRC. We would request that the GRC make sure that its plans are in fact realistic. The United States suffered a set-back in the Cuban affair, because of insufficient intelligence, a set-back we would not want to repeat.

Chiang replied that he hoped the President would authorize United States organizations to go into details on the request made during this visit, and that planning could continue after Chiang's return to Taiwan. President Chiang feels that efforts must be coordinated. The Chinese Communists are like a starving tiger. The tiger should be killed now, when he is weak, and before he has a chance to regain his strength.

17. The President asked if Chiang thought it would be possible to send 300 to 500 men by air to such distant Chinese Communist atomic installations as that at Pao-t'ou, and whether it was not likely that the planes involved would be shot down.

Chiang replied that this had been discussed by CIA officials yesterday and that they had indicated that such an operation was feasible.

18. President Kennedy stated that that the United States agreed that all feasible means should be used to weaken the Chinese Communist regime. The GRC wishes to return to its home, and we wish to ensure peace in the world. But we must be realistic. If operations which failed were to be undertaken, then we would be in a worse position than before. An example of this took place in 1961 in Cuba when the operations there were based more on hope than on realistic appraisals. We must be cold-blooded in our assessments. The United States cannot be involved in losing operations. If four to six divisions were put ashore on the China mainland and were defeated, this would be a set-back for the cause of freedom everywhere.

The President then summarized the United States position: the need now was for better intelligence, more detailed information about conditions on the China mainland, so that we might be assured that whatever action is undertaken would fit the actual situation. He promised that the United States would work closely with Chinese officials for these ends.

19. The meeting concluded with the usual courtesies and an exchange of gifts. Chiang presented the President with Chinese translation of his Inaugural Address and a copy of a Chinese translation of his book "Profiles in Courage". The President presented Chiang with an autographed photograph of himself.